

-Comment and Opinion-

TORRANCE, CALIF., SUNDAY, JULY 21, 1968

Salary Merry-Go-Round

It has long been the philosophy of the land—and the law of the city—that those men and women who are employed by the city must be paid wages comparable to those being paid in similar occupations and responsibilities in private industry.

To this end, an endless series of "surveys" has been made over the years purporting to show how city wages in certain occupations compare with those wages being paid by private industry for work requiring similar duties and responsibilities.

A growing practice, however, is to compare city to city—not city to private industry. It has even been stated by at least one high ranking Torrance official that government employers—presumably including cities—should lead the way in the matter of wages.

The Torrance City Council currently is being asked to endorse this new philosophy by granting healthy boosts in the salaries of its top echelon executives.

And it's all being presented as justifiable on the basis of a new salary survey—not a survey of private industry but of other city pay levels.

In the proposals now being studied by an *ad hoc* committee of the City Council, the pay of the city's top administrator, the city manager, would

be boosted from its present \$25,334 annual base to \$32,506.

The city attorney, now paid at an annual rate of \$23,328, would be hiked to \$27,012.

Other raises, including one which would put the assistant city manager at an annual base of \$25,728, are being offered as fair salaries on the basis of comparisons with selected California cities.

The Press-Herald is not convinced that present salaries are that far out of line, based on the qualifications required for the city's professional and executive employees, the large number of benefits not enjoyed by those in private industry, and the general security of their employment which rarely exists in comparable private employment.

Voters of Torrance have spoken clearly in the matter of pay as far as their elected representatives are concerned and only a few hundred dollars was involved here. We wonder what the voters might say to a proposal to grant a 24 per cent pay hike to the city manager, sending his pay to \$2,709 a month.

For that matter, we wonder what other city employees might say when they compare their own pay hikes to those "upstairs."

It might not be fit to print.

Open Season on Taxes

Open season on the sales tax has been—unofficially—declared by local and state elected officials in attempts to balance their respective record budgets.

Los Angeles City Council worked in round figures by doubling that city's sales tax sending it to 2 per cent.

Meanwhile, back at the capital, the state legislature approved a 90-day extension of the 5 per cent state sales

levy which was scheduled to drop to 4.5 per cent June 30.

On top of that, the L.A. City Council levied a tax on bar drinks and then set up a tax on drinking water.

And to round out the general political attack on the sales taxes, some proponents of a rapid transit system are asking .5 per cent boost in order to help finance construction of the proposed \$2.5 billion system in Los Angeles County, where, by the way, the tax boost would be levied.

A future sales tax ambush could be forthcoming if County Assessor Philip Watson's initiative for a 1 per cent of the market value levy for property related services and a phase-out of 20 per cent a year on taxes for education and welfare is successful on the November ballot.

By 1973, education and welfare, which are about as certain as the taxes themselves, will be without a tax base support. Sales taxes again will be a likely target.

Property owners may find some reductions soon in their annual shock statements from the county, but it is likely they will be dribbling away more of their income throughout the year in sales taxes than the reductions allow.

After the city grabs off its 2 per cent sales tax, the state gets 5 per cent and perhaps the rapid transit adds another 1 per cent, suddenly the property owner—and everybody else—will be paying 7 cents on every dollar spent.

It may be some relief for the homeowner to know that the open season in taxes is no longer declared on him. But then he does pay sales taxes and if he happens to enjoy a round of golf on a municipal course once-in-awhile there will be an additional 50 cent fee there, too, because of a budget cut.

You just can't win.

From Our Mailbox

Editor Thanked

Editor, Press-Herald

I want to thank you or whoever is responsible for printing the article regarding the formation of a new firm. The firm to which I'm referring: Winter Enterprises, Inc., of which Assemblyman Townsend is one of the directors.

I hope you will print more information concerning this organization.

Again, I thank you.

VELMA SHELBOURN
Torrance

Sewing Circle



Public Profanity-- A Protected Right?

By DICK TRIPP
News Advertiser Staff Writer

Profane, downright filthy four-letter words may soon be a part of our everyday language since persons wishing to display such atrocities may have a "constitutional right" to express their lewd feelings. An attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union will argue that right of a 19-year-old defendant to express his own feelings in four-letter words about the draft before a Los Angeles Municipal Court judge next month.

The ACLU attorney will argue that Paul R. Cohen had the "constitutional right" to display a term—usually limited to use in back alleys and gutters—printed on a black leather jacket he carried in Los Angeles County Courthouse. Cohen was arrested and charged with disturbing the peace.

"The very fact that the defendant chose to express his feelings about the draft through the use of a word that many would find shocking is an evidence of a depth of feeling which itself may be a significant factor as to which the self-governing community should take account," Melville Nimmer, ACLU attorney, said in a memorandum.

If the municipal judge rules that Cohen is constitutionally protected in his selection of words to show in public, the prosecution will be unable to submit the jacket as evidence and the case, like so many others before it, will be dismissed.

The idea that any person with a paint brush or with a black leather jacket has the constitutional right to express his feelings in four letter words in public makes us gag.

How long does the respectable citizen in this country have to put up with such nonsense and at the same time watch the "constitutional rights" of the whole dwindle away to those who cannot cope with society in general?

We're tired of seeing convicted criminals literally set free in appeals cases because of violations of their constitutional rights. We're sick of seeing suspects, arrested in the act of committing crimes, later released because officers didn't have the right to enter the premises.

And now we have to sit back again while the "rights" of one individual to parade profanity in public are crammed down our throats forevermore.

We are not questioning all "Constitutional rights." We are, however, asking when will the courts take into account the "responsibilities" that go hand in hand with these rights.

Constitutional rights are for all men—not just the few.

Drug suppliers, felons of all types and even murderers hide behind these rights while attorneys seek loopholes and judges rule in accord.

Each time a prime suspect is released on rights violations—every law abiding citizen in this nation pays with the loss of his own rights.

The issuance of a driver's license gives the bearer the right to operate a car—yet he must do so within the realm of the law. He carries a responsibility to other drivers.

But when we get into the area of crime, the general public is expected to be responsible and protect the criminal. His rights are first and foremost while the law abiding gets the leftovers.

The criminal commits murder so stricter gun control laws are asked. Stores are robbed at night so closing time is moved up to 6 p.m.

Record numbers of automobiles are being stolen and the owners are blamed for leaving the doors unlocked. Homes are burglarized and owners are asked to be more careful when leaving home. Government allocates funds for parks which go unused

because of fears of being attacked or robbed.

Are these not infringements on the everyday life of the responsible citizen?

And now we are being asked by the ACLU to tolerate the use of unprintable profanity in public because a 19-year-old has the right to express himself about the draft in these terms apparently because of a limited vocabulary.

When the youth of the nation has to run to the foul, four-letter words to express "depth of feeling" we wonder where the teachers are who constantly criticize administrators who insist they stress the 4 Rs in their classrooms.

We also wonder what has happened to the churches of our nation which are apparently over-looking the basics in religious instruction to become involved in the problems of the nation and the world.

While ministers are off on some poverty march in areas far removed from their churches, who bothers to give the necessary direction to the families and teenagers in their own communities.

And yet when a youth goes astray and is in trouble with the law, the ministers are usually the first ones to say we live in a sick society and the public is to blame.

We do not plan to take the blame for the irresponsibility demonstrated by those who have or who will use profane words in public—or private.

If the courts feel that those persons have the constitutional right to subject the entire population to their ill-mannered and irresponsible use of the four-letter words—then let the courts, and those attorneys who plead the cases, bear the burden of blame.

We're tired of doing it for them.

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Other Opinions

Waterville (Minn.) Advance: The rise in crime can be stopped only by Justice which deals swiftly and surely; convincing Justice which means quick arrest, prompt prosecution and substantial punishment equal to the crime. . . . Each generation has the duty, not to help himself to whatever he can get, but to extend the freedoms of the Bill of Rights so that they may continue as the core of our American heritage.

HERB CAEN SAYS:

City's Easy To Describe

San Francisco

Bernard Levin, the waspish featured columnist of the London Daily Mail, is a hawk on Vietnam and soft on San Francisco. Recently, when the S.F. Board of Supervisors passed what he calls "the toughest gun law in the United States," he chirped to his three million readers: "I knew there was one city that would not let me down."

After a pause to catch his breath, he continued: "I wish somebody would write a book that would really explain to those who, like me, love San Francisco, how that beautiful place manages to combine tolerance and good sense so gracefully and harmoniously. . . . Furthermore: "There are a number of good books on San Francisco, but they all, in the end, DESCRIBE it; they do not explain it. But something makes San Francisco different from any other city I have ever been in, including all other American cities."

Cities, like children, respond warmly to praise and gentle treatment, and I felt my own heart swell a bit at these kinds words from far off, swinging London. To see ourselves as others see us, especially when they see us so favorably, is a fine thing. All in all, a nice counterbalance to the hundreds of letters I've received over the years that begin equably: "You can take that over-rated city of yours with its dirty streets and dirty hippies and dirty shows and lousy restaurants and give it back to the Indians, if they'll take it."

But Mr. Levin does make a good point: San Francisco is easy to describe, difficult to explain. How, bordering on the same Bay, can it be so different from Oakland? How, being in the same State, can it be so unlike Los Angeles? How does it remain a city of the world in an ocean of insularity that threatens to grow more insular day by day? Some historians ascribe it to the fact that San Francisco was settled largely by a polyglot crew that came by sea from the corners of the globe, while the early Southern Californians arrived across the parched land (philosophical implications here of a dry, up-tight hardness), and undoubtedly this is part of it. But why, even today, are these differences apparent, to the point where San Francisco seems, more than ever, a last outpost of sanity and reason?

One explanation, of course, is that sophisticated observers, stretching far back from Bernard Levin past Rudyard Kipling to the Gold Rush days, sensed a "something different" about San Francisco—and the city, in gratitude, has tried to measure up. The look of the place has always been irresistible, especially to Europeans; they have given this city a glowing press for over a century.

As one who has been laying an egg in public daily for 30 years, I can attest that Horace is correct. July 5, 1938, died somewhere along the line, I'm not sure quite where or when; and kindly hold your congratulations, if any. If this 30-year stretch demonstrates anything, and I doubt it, it simply implies a fairly strong constitution, a thick skin to go along with a pointy head, and a decided lack of imagination. A rut is not a groove, and all that. I live in dread of the day my three-year-old son finds out what his old man does for a living. I suppose I had better tell him myself. I'd hate to have him pick it up in the streets.

As long as this mood is upon me—confession is good for heel as well as soul—I might as well tell you that this is my last anniversary column. If memory serves, I wrote epitaphs on the 10th, 20th and 25th, and no use overdoing a bad thing. It shall be laid to rest along with the annual Christmas poem, another dog that lost its bite. As has been noted by sharper minds than mine, it's okay to be bored but not to be a bore.

I don't know how you feel about it, dear friend and/or enemy, but it doesn't seem that long to me—these 30 years of six columns a week adding up to about eight million words, including time out for my generation's edition of war. The hard evidence is there, though in a wooden case against the office wall, facing me every day: the bound volumes, year by year, of all the columns, for bitter or better (The wooden is now filled, and Volume 30—1968 will have to go elsewhere—on the floor, out the window). I seldom look back over them, but when I do, it is usually with embarrassment—they were written by a stranger about dead people and places, and it is hardly credible that the jokes were even funny then. However, *autres temps, autres scenes*, and maybe someday I'll write that One Perfect Column.

To look on the brighter side, perhaps those 30 volumes will prove helpful 100 years hence to some historian digging for the essence of a San Francisco long gone—but I don't envy him his job of trying to distill some meaning out of those yellowed pages filled with fact, fancy and trivia.